

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A user interface for use with a content item delivery apparatus,
2 comprising:
3 a plurality of representations of the content items, the plurality of
4 representations of the content items being user selectable; and
5 a plurality of user selectable operators for performing functions on the
6 content items;
7 wherein the user interface enables the user to obtain a license associated
8 with the content item, the license corresponding to an access level, the access level
9 defining a different set of conditions, wherein the license associated with the selected
10 content item includes access level information corresponding to an access level selected
11 by the user.
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- 1 2. The user interface recited in claim 1, further comprising:
2 a server network device located at a first node, the server network device
3 being programmed to provide the user interface;
4 a user network-enabled device located at a second node and
5 communicatively coupled to the server network device via a network, the user network-
6 enabled device being programmed to access the user interface.
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- 1 3. The user interface recited in claim 2, wherein the network
2 comprises the Internet and the user interface comprises a main website.
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- 1 4. The user interface recited in claim 1, wherein the plurality of
2 representations of the content items comprise virtual representations of the content items.
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- 1 5. The user interface recited in claim 4, wherein the virtual
2 representations of the content items comprise a plurality of selectable virtual video boxes.
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- 2 6. The user interface recited in claim 5, wherein the plurality of
3 selectable virtual video box representations of the digital video signals comprise a virtual
4 carousel of selectable virtual video boxes, the virtual carousel being capable of simulated
5 movement so that the spinning of a video rental store carousel is simulated.
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- 1 7. The user interface recited in claim 5, wherein the plurality of
2 selectable virtual video box representations of the digital video signals comprise a virtual

shelf of selectable virtual video boxes, the virtual shelf being capable of simulated movement so that searching a video rental store shelf is simulated.

8. The user interface recited in claim 5, wherein the plurality of selectable virtual video box representations of the digital video signals may be manipulated in 3D so that all sides of the virtual video box representations of the digital video signals may be viewed by the user.

9. The user interface recited in claim 1, further comprising at least one display area for staging a user-perceptible form of the content items.

10. The user interface recited in claim 9, wherein the at least one display area on the user interface for staging of the content item in a user-perceptible form comprises a streaming box for playing at least one of a movie clip and a trailer of a movie.

11. The user interface recited in claim 1, further comprising a plurality of website pages for performing at least one of facilitating searching of the content items, facilitating browsing of the content items, facilitating licensing of the content items, facilitating downloading of the content items, and facilitating display of the content items.

12. The user interface recited in claim 1, wherein the plurality of user selectable operators comprise selectable virtual buttons for at least one of moving between a plurality of web pages, choosing a search option, choosing a browse option, and choosing a display option.

13. The user interface recited in claim 12, wherein the search options comprise at least one of a movie genre, a movie actor, a movie director, a movie producer, a movie date, a movie download time, and a movie license cost.

14. The user interface recited in claim 12, wherein the browse options comprise at least one of a movie genre, a movie actor, a movie director, a movie producer, a movie date, a movie download time, and a movie license cost.

15. The user interface recited in claim 12, wherein the display options comprise at least one of a text list, an image list, a video box list, a grid, a stack, a virtual carousel, and a video shelf.

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1 16. The user interface recited in claim 11, further comprising a
2 recommendation page for displaying to the user at least one representation of the content
3 items determined to be of interest to the user by a recommendation engine based on user
4 criteria.

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1 17. The user interface recited in claim 16, wherein the content items
2 determined to be of interest to the user by the recommendation engine is staged in the at
3 least one display area on the user interface.

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1 18. The user interface recited in claim 16, wherein the recommendation
2 engine is implemented in software routines.

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1 19. The user interface recited in claim 16, wherein the user criteria
2 comprises at least one of the user's answers to a questionnaire provided by the user
3 interface, the user's activities on the user interface, the user's shopping habits, and the
4 user's activities on other websites.

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1 20. The user interface recited in claim 11, further comprising a MyList
2 page for displaying to the user at least one representation of the content items marked as
3 being of interest to the user by a remember engine.

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1 21. The user interface recited in claim 20, wherein the remember
2 engine marks the content items based on previous user activities on the user interface.

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1 22. The user interface recited in claim 21, wherein the previous user
2 activities comprise selecting a representation of the content items to obtain more
3 information about the selected content items.

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1 23. The user interface recited in claim 5, further comprising a movie
2 page for displaying for a selected movie at least one of reviews of the selected movie, a
3 hyperlink for an official movie website for the selected movie, an enlarged virtual video
4 box representation of the selected movie, comments about the selected movie, a synopsis
5 of the selected movie, a clip of the selected movie, and a trailer of the selected movie.

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1 24. The user interface recited in claim 5, further comprising an order
2 page for requesting a selected movie based on a defined level of access.

1 25. The user interface recited in claim 24, wherein the defined level of
2 access comprises a license which is purchased by a user so that the user may play the
3 selected movie a defined number of times during a defined time window.
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1 26. The user interface recited in claim 5, further comprising an open
2 order page for displaying a list of movies that have been ordered by the user but which
3 the user has not yet viewed.
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1 27. The user interface recited in claim 5, further comprising an unlock
2 page for providing a key to the user to allow the user to convert a downloaded digital
3 video signal to a user-perceptible form.
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1 28. The user interface recited in claim 1, wherein the plurality of
2 representations of the content items comprise textual representations of the content items.
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1 29. The user interface recited in claim 5, wherein selecting the plurality
2 of virtual representations of the content items by left-clicking a mouse displays additional
3 information about the selected content items.
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1 30. The user interface recited in claim 5, wherein selecting the plurality
2 of virtual representations of the content items by right-clicking a mouse takes the user to
3 an order page for the selected content items so that the user may purchase a license for the
4 selected content items.
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1 31. The user interface recited in claim 1, wherein the plurality of user
2 selectable operators comprise selectable menus for at least one of printing, saving files,
3 editing text, and selecting movie options.
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1 32. A method for implementing a user interface for use with a content
2 items delivery apparatus, comprising:

3 displaying a plurality of representations of the content items on the user
4 interface, the plurality of representations of the content items being user selectable;
5 providing a plurality of user selectable operators for performing functions
6 on the content items;

7 licensing selected content items to the user based on a defined level of
8 access, the license corresponding to an access level, the access level defining a different

9 set of conditions, wherein the license associated with the selected content items includes
10 access level information corresponding to an access level selected by the user.

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1 33. The method recited in claim 32, further comprising:
2 programming a server network device to provide the user interface, the
3 server network device being located at a first node;
4 providing access to the user interface by a user network-enabled device
5 located at a second node and communicatively coupled to the server network device via a
6 network.

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1 34. The method recited in claim 32, wherein the network comprises the
2 Internet and the user interface comprises a main website.

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1 35. The method recited in claim 32, wherein displaying the plurality of
2 representations comprises displaying a plurality of virtual representations of the content
3 items.

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1 36. The method recited in claim 35, wherein displaying the plurality of
2 virtual representations of the content items comprises displaying a plurality of selectable
3 virtual video boxes representing digital video signals.

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2 37. The method recited in claim 36, wherein displaying the plurality of
3 selectable virtual video box representations of the digital video signals comprises
4 displaying a virtual carousel of selectable virtual video boxes, the virtual carousel being
5 capable of simulated movement so that the spinning of a video rental store carousel is
6 simulated.

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1 38. The method recited in claim 36, wherein displaying the plurality of
2 selectable virtual video box representations of the digital video signals comprises
3 displaying a virtual shelf of selectable virtual video boxes, the virtual shelf being capable
4 of simulated movement so that searching a video rental store shelf is simulated.

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1 39. The method recited in claim 36, wherein displaying the plurality of
2 selectable virtual video box representations of the digital video signals comprises
3 allowing the selectable virtual video box representations of the digital video signals to be
4 manipulated in 3D so that all sides of the virtual video box representations of the digital
5 video signals may be viewed by the user.

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1 40. The method recited in claim 32, further comprising providing at
2 least one display area for staging a user-perceptible form of the content items.

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1 41. The method recited in claim 40, wherein providing at least one
2 display area for staging a user-perceptible form of the content items comprises providing
3 a streaming box for playing at least one of a movie clip and a trailer of a movie.

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1 42. The method recited in claim 32, further comprising providing a
2 plurality of website pages for performing at least one of facilitating the searching of the
3 content items, facilitating browsing of the content items, facilitating licensing of the
4 content items, facilitating downloading of the content items, and facilitating display of the
5 content items.

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1 43. The method recited in claim 32, wherein providing the plurality of
2 user selectable operators comprises providing selectable virtual buttons for at least one of
3 moving between a plurality of web pages, choosing a search option, choosing a browse
4 option, and choosing a display option.

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1 44. The method recited in claim 43, wherein providing selectable
2 virtual buttons for choosing a search option comprises providing selectable virtual buttons
3 for choosing at least one of a movie genre, a movie actor, a movie director, a movie
4 producer, a movie date, a movie download time, and a movie license cost.

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1 45. The method recited in claim 43, wherein providing selectable
2 virtual buttons for choosing a browse option comprises providing selectable virtual
3 buttons for choosing at least one of a movie genre, a movie actor, a movie director, a
4 movie producer, a movie date, a movie download time, and a movie license cost.

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1 46. The method recited in claim 43, wherein providing selectable
2 virtual buttons for choosing the display options comprises providing selectable virtual
3 buttons for choosing at least one of a text list, an image list, a video box list, a grid, a
4 stack, a virtual carousel, and a video shelf.

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1 47. The method recited in claim 42, further comprising providing a
2 recommendation page for displaying to the user at least one representation of the content

items determined to be of interest to the user by a recommendation engine based on user criteria.

48. The method recited in claim 47, further comprising staging the content items determined to be of interest to the user by the recommendation engine in the at least one display area on the user interface.

49. The method recited in claim 42, further comprising providing a MyList page for displaying to the user at least one representation of the content items marked as being of interest to the user by a remember engine.

50. The method recited in claim 36, further comprising providing a movie page for displaying for a selected movie at least one of reviews of the selected movie, a hyperlink for an official movie website for the selected movie, an enlarged virtual video box representation of the selected movie, comments about the selected movie, a synopsis of the selected movie, a clip of the selected movie, and a trailer of the selected movie.

51. The method recited in claim 36, further comprising providing an order page for requesting a selected movie based on a defined level of access.

52. The method recited in claim 36, further comprising providing an open order page for displaying a list of movies that have been ordered by the user but which the user has not yet viewed.

53. The method recited in claim 36, further comprising providing an unlock page for providing a key to the user to allow the user to convert a downloaded digital video signal to a user-perceptible form.

54. A user interface for use with a content delivery apparatus, comprising:
a plurality of images associated with content items, the plurality of images associated with content items being user-selectable; and
at least one area of the user interface for display of streaming video;
wherein the at least one streaming video display area displays streaming video of content corresponding to a content item associated with at least one of the plurality of user selectable images.

1 55. The user interface recited in claim 54, wherein the content item to
2 be displayed in the at least one streaming video display area of the user interface is
3 selected automatically by the content delivery apparatus.
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1 56. The user interface recited in claim 55, wherein the content item
2 displayed in the at least one streaming video display area of the user interface is
3 selected automatically based on at least one of pre-defined user preferences and
4 promotional considerations.
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1 57. The user interface recited in claim 54, wherein the content item to
2 be displayed in the at least one streaming video display area of the user interface is
3 chosen by a user by selecting one of the plurality of representations.
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1 58. The user interface recited in claim 54, wherein the content item
2 displayed in the at least one streaming video display area is a trailer for one of the
3 content items associated with one of the plurality of images.
4

1 59. The user interface recited in claim 54, wherein the content item
2 displayed in the at least one streaming video display area is a representative segment for
3 one of the content items associated with one of the plurality of images.
4

1 60. A user interface for use with a content delivery apparatus,
2 comprising:
3 a plurality of images associated with content items, the plurality of
4 images associated with content items being user-selectable;
5 wherein the plurality of images associated with content items comprise
6 virtual representations of a standard box or package in which the content items are
7 typically contained in a conventional store.
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1 61. The user interface recited in claim 60, wherein virtual
2 representations of a standard box or package comprise virtual representations of a
3 standard video box.
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1 62. The user interface recited in claim 60, wherein virtual
2 representations of a standard box or package comprise virtual representations of a
3 standard music compact disc box.
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1 63. A virtual carousel interface for use with a content delivery
2 apparatus, comprising:
3 a plurality of images associated with content items, the plurality of
4 images associated with content items being user-selectable;
5 a plurality of rows, each row having a plurality of images, each image
6 associated with a respective content item, the plurality of images being user-selectable;
7 and
8 means for simulating lateral motion of images in each row to simulate
9 boxes on a carousel rack.

1 64. A method for recommending content items to users of a content
2 delivery apparatus, comprising:
3 storing user preference data representing possible preferences of a given
4 user or group of users;
5 determining particular content items that may be of interest to a particular
6 user based on the stored user preference data; and
7 displaying to the user, on a user interface, user-selectable images
8 associated with the content items determined to be of interest to the user.

1 65. The method recited in claim 64, wherein determining particular
2 content items that may be of interest to a particular user comprises programming a
3 processor to determine the particular content items based on the stored user preference
4 data.

1 66. The method recited in claim 65, wherein programming the
2 processor to determine the particular content items comprises programming the
3 processor to track user activity to determine content item preferences of the user.

1 67. The method recited in claim 66, wherein the user activity
2 comprises at least one of previous purchases, previous selections of content items, and
3 software programs operated by the user.

1 68. The method recited in claim 64, wherein determining particular
2 content items that may be of interest to a particular user comprises collecting user
3 responses to questionnaires.

1 69. A method for generating a record of content items designated by a
2 user of a user interface as being of interest, comprising:
3 tracking user activity to determine content items that the user has
4 previously accessed;
5 maintaining a record of the content items that the user has previously
6 accessed;
7 displaying to the user, on a user interface, user-selectable images
8 associated with the content items that the user has previously accessed.
9

1 70. The method recited in claim 69, wherein tracking user activity
2 comprises programming a processor to track user activity.
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1 71. The method recited in claim 69, wherein maintaining the record of
2 the content items that the user has previously accessed comprises maintaining the record
3 in a database accessible by a server network device.
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1 72. The method recited in claim 69, wherein displaying to the user, on
2 a user interface, user-selectable images associated with the content items that the user has
3 previously accessed comprises displaying user-selectable representations of the content
4 items in a user-selectable text list.
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1 73. A method for authorization of a license for content, the license
2 being transferred from a first user network-enabled device to a second user network-
3 enabled device, comprising:
4 transferring the content from the first user network-enabled device to the second
5 user network-enabled device;
6 connecting the second user network-enabled device to a server network device,
7 the server network device providing a user interface;
8 obtaining a license for the content;
9 wherein the license allows the second user network-enabled device access
10 to the content in a user-perceptible form under conditions defined in the license.
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1 74. The method recited in claim 73, wherein connecting the second
2 user network-enabled device to the server network device comprises connecting to a
3 website on the Internet.
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1 75. The method recited in claim 73, wherein transferring the content
2 from the first user network-enabled device to the second user network-enabled device
3 comprises copying the content to a computer readable disc, transporting the computer
4 readable disc to the location of the second user network-enabled device, and copying the
5 content from the computer readable disc to the second user network-enabled device.
6

1 76. The method recited in claim 73, wherein transferring the content
2 from the first user network-enabled device to the second user network-enabled device
3 comprises downloading the content from the first user network-enabled device to the
4 second user network-enabled device over a network.
5

1 77. The method recited in claim 73, wherein transferring the content
2 from the first user network-enabled device to the second user network-enabled device
3 comprises the second user network-enabled device accessing content residing on the first
4 user network-enabled device through a file-swapping user interface provided by the
5 server network device, the file-swapping user interface allowing access to and transfer of
6 content, the content residing on a plurality of user network-enabled devices, the plurality
7 of user network-enabled devices being connected to the file-swapping user interface.
8

1 78. The method recited in claim 77, further comprising selection by the
2 user of the second user network-enabled device of content residing on the first user
3 network-enabled device and requesting transfer of the selected content to the second user
4 network-enabled device.
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1 79. The method recited in claim 78, further comprising transferring the
2 selected content from the first user network-enabled device to the second user network-
3 enabled device.
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